

2 Bible for the Poor
873. h. 16
Bathshebaes
INSTRVCTIONS
to her Sonne *LEMUEL*:

Containing a fruitfull and plaine
Exposition of the last Chapter of the
P R O V E R B S.

Describing the duties of a Great-man,
AND
The vertues of a Gracious Woman.

Penned by a godly and learned man,
new with God.

Perused, and published for the vse of Gods Church,

By { *John Dod,*
AND
William Hinde.



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and are to be sold at his shop neere the great
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47.

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TO THE RIGHT

Honorable, WILLIAM LORD SAYE,
and SEALE, together with the re-
ligious Lady ELIZABETH his
wife, Grace and peace in
Christ Iesus.

MY GOOD LORD:

I Present you here with a di-
uine Jewell, which as it was
found by a rich Merchant
in his *field*, so was it polished by the
cunning skill of his owne most *curi-*
ous hand. If you behold the *quantitie*,
it may seeme but as a *Mite*: but if you
consider the *quality* and vertue there-
of, it is farre to bee preferred aboue
much *refined gold*. For among o-
thers, it hath this *hidden vertue*: that
A 3 whofo.

THE EPISTLE

whosoever contemplates the *lustre* thereof with a *chaste eye*, it will reflect a *sanctified illumination* into his *very heart*. And seeing that by *Gods providence* it came to my hands, when as by the death of the Author it was like to have been *lost* : I thought my selfe bound in conscience to communicate it with the *Church of God* for the *publike good*, rather then to keepe it still in my closet for my owne *private benefit*.

And howsoever the *splendor* of this *Jewell* will gladd the *heart* of every eye that seeth it, yet being well considered, you shall finde it belongeth by a more *peculier right*, to such among the *sonnes and daughters* of men, who are *eminent* for their *birth*, and *honourable* for their *place and condition*. And because the *worth* of the *jewel* required a *Patron* of no meaner ranke then one of the *sonnes of Nobles* : I thought
good

DEDICATORIE.

good to recommend this *Jewell* vnto
your *Lordships Patronage* and *protecti-*
on: and the rather, that it might bee
some *testimonie* of the *fauours* which I
haue receiued from: and of that *duty*
wherein I acknowledge my selfe to be
indebted vnto your *Lordship*. It is now
your *owne*: oh let the *light* and *lustre*
of euery *beame* therein, shine in your
Person, and appeare in your *practise*:
that to the glorie of *God*, the ioy of
your *friends*, and solace of your *owne*
conscience, *Grace* and *Honour*, *Godlinesse*
and *greatnesse*, *knowledge* and *sanctifica-*
tion, may be scene in you amiably to
embrace, and beuatifully to *adorne* one
another. For when after a *long account*
you shall at the last come to cast
vp your *Summa totalis*, you shall finde,
that *Godlinesse* will proue the *greatest*
gaine, *Grace* the *richest treasure*, and
Gods fauour the *highest honour*. The
Lord with his fauorable countenance
blesse

THE EPISTLE, &c.

Psal. 92. 13. 14

*blesse you and your vertuous Ladys, and
euery branch of your vine; that as
the Lords planting you may to flourish
in Gods courts, that branches be neuer
wanting to your stocke, nor fruit vnto
your braunches, that men may see that
verified of your honourable vine, which
the heathen man said of his golden tree;*

*Primo avulso non deficit alter
Aureus, & simili frondescit virga metallo.*

Bunbury in Cheshire. *July 13. 1614.*

Your Honours in all christian
duty, to be commanded:

WILLIAM HINDE.



AN EXPOSITION

upon the last Chapter of
the PROVERBS.

(*)

PROVERBS Chap. 31.

Verse 1. *The words of King Lemuel,
the collection wherein his mother in-
structed him.*

Verse 2. *What my sonne ? and what
a sonne of my wombe ? and a sonne of
my vowes ?*



THE scope and drift of the first
verse is set forth vnto vs, that it
is the duety of Parents to teach
and instruct their children, and

B

that

that it is the Childrens duty, firmly to retaine in memory the instruction, and precepts of their Parents.

The drift, and scope, of the second verse is to shew, that children ought to be perswaded of the loue of their Parents, to the end that they bee the better confirmed and strengthened in the doctrine vvhich they teach them.

* Called also
Bathsua.
1. Chron. 3. 5

IN this Chapter, two things are to be observed: First the Title: Secondly, An Exhortation, and admonition of * *Bathsheba* the mother vnto *Salomon* her sonne.

The title is described by a double efficient cause: First by *Bathsheba* the author, which is noted by her relative; to wit, the mother of *Salomon*: And Secondly, by *Salomon* the reporter, who also is declared by another relative; to wit, the title of King. It is further also described by the finall cause, which is, that the mother should instruct her sonne *Salomon*.

Afterwards is declared the duty of children, which is faithfully to retain the wholesome precepts, and admonitions of their parents, and rather then they should be forgotten, to commit them to writing, to the end, that they may in their practice of life,
by

by their deedes expresse them, for the obedience of children, dooth not so much consist in bowing the knees to their Parents, in giuing them outwarde honour and reuerence, and in asking their blessing &c. as in obseruing the lessons, and instructions, vvhich are deliuered to them by their Parents.

And as *Salomon* kept, and preserved these precepts, not for his owne vse onely; but also for the profit of the posteritie of the Church: So it behooueth children, after they haue applied them first to their owne vse, to haue care to teach them to their children begotten by them.

In *Bethsheba* the other efficient cause is to bee noted, the duety of Parents in generall, and in speciall of mothers; which is, to bring vp and instruct their Children, euen their sonnes in the feare of God, and to endewe them vvith lessons and precepts, which may bee of vse vnto them; not onely whilest they are vnder their nurturing, gouernment, and oversight: but also may bee necessary and profitable vnto them for the framing and gouerning the vvhole course of their life: and that euen from their *cradles; which appeareth by her louing manner of speech toward him, calling him

B 2

him

Eph. 6, 4

1. Chron 28. 9

Exo. 12, 26, 27

2. Tim. 1, 5

* Tim. 3, 15

Pro. 4. 3

him *Lemuel*, a thing obserued by mothers to their children, whilst they are in their tender yeeres.

Then it is also to be noted in what things chiefly is scene the loue of parents, which is lawfull, to wit, that by how much the more they loue their children, by so much the more plentifully and abundantly they should enforme them in the feare of God. For whereas *Bethsheba* held her sonne *Salomon* most deere vnto her, as doth very manifestly appeare by the fourth chapter of the *Proverbs*, verse 31. and by the second verse of this chapter, shee did witnesse and testifie this her loue, by a most diligent, and religious education of him, contrary to that which parents and mothers (especially in these dayes) doe; which doe expresse their loue to their children in cloathing them in gay apparell, feeding them with delicate meates, allowing them greater liberty, and licence of life, and by ouer much cockering of them. Which care as it is to bee vsed towards all children, so more especially towards those of whom there is greater hope and expectation, that they shall one day liue in the publike sight of men, and as it were in the face of the common wealth, and of the Church. For, that it was knowne to *Bathsheba*, that *Salomon* her sonne

1. Chro. 28. 9.
10. 20.

Gen. 49. 1. 2.

sonne should succeed in the Kingdome, it appears *1. Kings* 1. 13. 17. and that *Dauid* had three other sonnes borne to him by *Bathsheba*, it is manifest, *1. Chron.* 3. 5. And hitherto of the former part of this Chapter.

There followeth the speech or admonition of *Bathsheba* the Mother, to her sonne *Salomon*, which consisteth in two things. First in an insinuating into fauour, or a foregarding of that which shee hath to speake, verse 2. Secondly, in the precepts shee giueth to him, verse 3. And in the whole chapter following.

Verse 2.

In the former, *Bathsheba* doth it, that *Salomon* might vnderstand that he was only, and most deerely loued of her: and therefore that this her charge vnto him, proceeded from a most entire and feruent loue towards him.

Hitherto belongeth her affectionate speech; whereby shee giueth him to vnderstand, that her loue towards him was the greater, and that by the feruent, and louing affection of her minde, shee would teach him more things, then by her words he could attaine vnto.

From whence it is to be vnderstood, that in euery instruction or admonition, publike, or private, from equals, or vnequals, diligent heede is to bee taken, not onely that it doe proceede from loue, but also that it may bee

made knowne vnto those to whom such admonition is giuen, that they are beloued of them, who in regard of their office and calling, doe take vpon them to admonish and instruct them. As also by how much the greater, and harder things are giuen in charge, it is meete that there bee so much the more plentifull, and more abundant testimony declared of their loue towards them that are admonished: But aboue all things it is most commendable to leaue testimony of this loue, whereas more sharpe medicines both of words and punishments are applied.

Iosh. 7. 19.

Which thing to any man that will apply his minde vnto it, may easily appeare to haue beene obserued of the Apostle, both in the Epistle to the *Galatians*, as also in the second of the *Corinthians*: for as the Chyrurgions before they minister more sharpe and biting remedies, doe vse certaine lenitiues and molitiues: so in sharpe correction, a more plentifull testimony of loue (as it were a mollitiue) ought to be set before.

Gal. 4. 14. 19.

2. Cor. 11. 17.

2. Cor. 12. 15.

Whereas shee calleth him the sonne of her vowes, it appeareth that shee not onely delt with *Salomon* for his godly education, but also commended this matter to God, without whom all her paines taken to enforme, and instruct him would be but lost and in vaine.

But

But whereas shee vsed not prayers onely but vowes, and that not one, but many, shee did therein declare both her singular loue towards *Salomon*, and her pietie towards God. Furthermore it ought to giue comfort and courage vnto parents, that there is such plentifull fruit of the mothers instruction, prayers and vowes, as they by that meanes may through Gods blessing haue a sonne excellling both in piety, wisdom, and glory. And hitherto of the first part of her speech.

It followeth that we speake of the instructions, which are of two sorts. First of things to be eschewed, and auoided; and secondly, of things to be pursued and followed.

Verse 3. Giue not thy strength to women, nor thy waies to those that destroy Kings.

THe scope and drift of this Prouerbe, is, by propounding a grieuous losse and punishment to terrifie *Salomon* from filthinesse, a dissuasion, or dehortation from

from filthy lusts, and the reason of this dissuasion. Although I cannot according to my vow endow thee with lessons and instructions, yet will I endeavour to doe what I can therein.

Ezek. 16. 8.
49.

Besides, the aptnesse and pronenes of youth to fall into this sinne, a Kingly state, and condition doth many times kindle flames of lust, and doth minister helps vnto them: as first a bountifull table furnished with variety of delicates; then his seruants, and those which are conuersant with him, who because of their number being of sundry dispositions there will not want among them such as will be very forward and ready to stirre vp, and satisfie the lusts of Kings, as appeareth. *Gen. 12. 15. & 20. 2. and 2. Sam. 11. 3. & 2. Sam. 13. 4. 5.*

But aboue all things, the greatest spurre and entisement to this sinne, is the hope of impunity, that there will be none that will punish them according to their desert, nor that will so much as dare to mutter against them, or to say, Sir why haue you done this? which if it were worthily weighed and considered, ought to be a bridle vnto Kings, to keepe them backe, and restraints them from that vice.

Forasmuch as in neglecting this duty of admo-

admonishing them their estate should bee very dangerous, considering that euen *Dauid* himselfe, after the adultery he had committed, did not by repentance turne vnto God, before he was by the reprehension of the Prophet *Nathan* drawn out of that sinke of filthinesse, whereinto hee was fallen.

The reason of this exhortation is drawn from the inconuenience ensuing, to wit, that by this vice, Kings, and Kingdomes are destroyed. *Iob* 31. 3. 9. 10. 11. 12.

And as in priuate men, by this vice their strength is infeebled, and made weake, the powers, and faculties of the minde, are taken away, and their whole estate is consumed; so especially in Kings, who doe more grievously offend, to the vtter ouerthrow of their Kingdomes, and the truth of this (as in a most cleere glasse) is to be seene. First in the *Beniamites*, who for the rauishing of one woman, were almost rooted out, then in *Danid* who lacked little, but that he had lost the Kingdome, both from himselfe & his posterity. Lastly, in *Salomon*, who notwithstanding he was the richest man that euer was, or will be, yet by his monstrous and beastly lusts, was brought to that state, it requiring and exacting great

Pro. 7. 22. 23.
Hof. 4. 11.
Pro. 7.

Iudg. 20. 45.
Iud. 21. 3.

2. Sam. 12. 10.
11.

1. King 12. 11.

Neb. 13. 26.

1. King 4. 7. &
7. 4

tributes, and subsidies of his subiects, he gaue occasion that ten tribes fell from his sonne.

True it is, indeed, that these men did all of them escape vtter destruction, because they repented. But if God so seuerely and sharply punished two whole tribes, and two Kings, so notable and famous for their piety: Where shal that man be found, whose sinnes he will spare.

Verse 4. *Be it farre from Kings, o Le-
muel; be it farre from Kings to drink
wine, or Rulers the desire of strong
drinke.*

Verse 5. *Least hee drinke and forget
the ordinance, and so change the right
of the children of affliction.*

Verse 6. *Giue strong drinke vnto him
that is ready to perish, and wine to
those that are grieved in minde.*

Verse 7. *Let him drinke that hee may
forget*

forget his pouerty, and may re member his grieve no more.

THe scope & drift of these verses is, to instruct and enforme Kings, and such as are in authority, and rich men, concerning the lawfull and moderate vse of wine.

In the Lawe, many kindes of meates were forbidden vnto all men, and consequently vnto Kings; but wee do not read of any kindes of drinckes that were thereby restrained, but onely from certaine particular persons. *Numbers 6.* Wherefore, at the first appearance it seemeth somewhat strange, and differing from the lawe which is heere commaunded, and the rather for that the drinking of wine is here forbidden to Princes, to whom of all others as in meates, so also in drinckes, delicacy is most iustly allowed, as well for that they are well furnished with meanes to procure them, as also for that dainties of meates and drinckes are most fit for them, to maintaine their royall port and dignity.

Whither also may be added; that they being pressed and ouercharged with most

walghty affaires, it seemeth they should chiefly be recreated, and refreshed with such comforts of this life. But he which shall more thoroughly search into these words, shall easily perceiue that the vse of wine is not heere forbidden, but the immoderate and excessiue drinking of it; which as it is by the Apostle condemned in all men *Ephes. 5. 18.* So in Kings it is most offensive, as those who both by their example do most hurt, and also for that their wits confounded, and robbed with excessse of wine, must needs cause corrupt and false iudgement; for both it is an hinderance to the finding out of iustice in suites, and actions; and also must needs drawe them into error in giuing sentence, and iudgement.

Eccle. 10. 16, 17

Hereof it is that *Salomon* sayth: *Eccles. 10. 16. Woe vnto thee o land whose King is a child, and whose Princes eate in the morning: and blessed art thou o land, whose King is the son of Nobles, and whose Princes eate in time for strength, and not for drunkenness.*

Leu. 10. 1, 9

Hitherto, also, may bee referred that which is in the tenth of *Leuiticus*; that by the onely fault of the sonnes of *Aaron* bringing strange fire vnto the alter there was

was a lawe giuen of God, that the Priests (so long as they were in the Tabernacle, and Temple, and did minister the holy things) should not once taste wine; so that that there is a more sparing and strict vse of it, in the Ministry, than in the ciuill Magistracie: To whom of all men the drinking of wine was neuer denied, as vnto the Ministers vnder the lawe at certaine times, which seueritie of the Lawe, seemeth to bee mitigated in the Ministers vnder the Gospel 1. *Tim.* 5. 23.

But the excesse is described by the cause, *viz.* the desire of vvine, and strong drinke; for as of mony the vse of it is not forbidden, but the coueting and loue of it; so also of wine, not the vse, but the desiring, and lusting after it; by which immoderate vse men fall to ryot.

It is also worthy the obseruing, that shee describeth the discommoditie of the immoderate vse of vvine, by forgetting iudgement, and that which is by the lawe prescribed, and thereby she teacheth, that by the excessive vse of strong drinke euen the skilfullest and most learned in the lawe, doe swarue from equitie and iustice, to the end, that no man trusting to his owne skil,

and redinesse of his wit, should allowe himselfe the more liberty in drinking: for, although wine doth not, presently, take away the knowledge of the lawe; yet entering into the braine, it doeth (for a time) cause a forgetfulnesse of equity and iudgement, both in those which, according to the lawe doe purpose to giue sentence, and also much more in those which do not encline to iustice.

ose 4.11

Notwithstanding the continuall vse of it, or abuse rather, doth altogether weaken the minde, and vnderstanding: It is also of no smal force to diswade Iudges from ouermuch drinking of wine, least they change the iudgement of those, which bring their causes before them; whom here she doth call the children of affliction, by which manner of speech she seemeth to meane all those, which do bring iust causes in suite against others, for although they be placed in a diuers degree of affliction, and some more then others are oppressed and ouercharged with griefe; yet there is none which bringeth a good cause before a Iudge, but that hee is affected with griefe for some iniury that is offered him; but now with newe affliction to ouercharge him, which was already griued and troubled

bled with the suite it selfe, is both vniust, and cruell, and as in euery iudgement, a most sparing vse of wine is to bee obserued, so especially in capitall matters, and matters of life and death.

It is also the duty of Kings, and princes to prouide that those which are great men in the common weale, and doe sit as Iudges, be not giuen to wine, and good *Bathsbeba* in this her exhortation to her sonne, with Kings doth ioine other Princes.

In the 6. and 7. verses shee prooueth by the contrary, that wine is not to bee giuen to Kings, and Princes, because it is to be giuen to those that are ready to perish, and to such as are heavy in minde, to those that are employed in iudgement rather then to Iudges, rather to the afflicted then to such as liue in all plenty, and abundance.

Hereof was that laudable custome among the people of God; that a man dying, his friends should be by others inuited to a banquet, and that there should be giuen them a cup of consolation *Ier. 16.* farre otherwise then now is vsed amongst vs, whereas the widowes that are ouercharged with griefe for the death of their husbands, doe make a banquet to their neighbours

Mat. 15. 23.

bors, and kinsfolke, hereof also (it may be) came that custome, of making those drinke, which are going to execution, both among vs, and among the people of God, as may be gathered by the story of the sufferings of Christ: where it may be demaunded, why Christ refused to drinke wine, when it was offered, contrary to that, which the holy ghost doth here commaund by *Bathsheba*. The answer is, that for the same cause Christ refused to drinke wine, for the which it is here commanded; least forgetting the torments and paines which he suffered for vs, hee should not pay the iust prize of our sinnes. Wherefore that he might remember vs, he would forget himselfe, neither would he giue himselfe liberty to drinke wine, before the punishment due vnto our sinnes, was quite taken away and satisfied, which ought to teach vs, that wee ought for the good of our neighbour, to abstaine from wine, 1. Cor. 8. 13. Rom. 14. 23.

But whereas it is not lawfull for those that are ready to perish, and such as are afflicted in minde, to drawne themselves in drinke, to make themselves sencelesse and blockish, and yet a more liberall vse of wine is granted vnto them, then to those that
sit

fit in iudgements seat, thereof it followeth that Kings must drinke more sparingly, and Iudges, especially going to sit in iudgement.

Hitherto of those things which are forbidden, and of the negative precepts there follow such things as are commaunded, which doe either concerne the common weale, or a priuate family, whereof the first is handled in the two next verses, the other in the chapter following.

*Verse 8. Open thy mouth for the
dumbe in the cause of all the children
of destruction.*

*Verse 9. Open thy mouth, iudge righte-
ously, and iudge the cause of the poore
and needie.*

THe scope and drift of these verses, is to declare, that wee ought to take vpon vs the defence, as of all men, so especially those that are destitute of helpe.

It is the duty of a iust and an vpriight
D Iudge

Isa. 22, 23, 24.

Isa. 1, 23.

Ier. 5, 28.

Exo. 22, 21, 22.

Zach. 7, 10.

Iam. 1, 17.

Verse 9.

Iudge, to take care for all men, and to be as it were a naile in a wall, whereupon may be hanged all vessels, as well cups as other implements and vtensils: but there ought to be a more speciall, and chiefe care had of those, who for their impotency, cannot, or dare not follow their iust cause, of which sort are widdowes, orphanes, or pupils, and strangers.

And for that cause yee ought to imitate God the most iust Iudge, who professeth himselfe to be the God of the widdow, of the orphant and straunger; that by how much the neerer such a one is to ruine, and ouerthrow; so much the rather should he feele experience of the Iudges helpe, for the maintenance of his cause.

Hereof it is which *Iob* saith, that he purchased the blessing of him that was ready to perish, to come vpon him, and that he caused the heart of the widdow to sing for ioy, that he deliuered the afflicted fatherlesse, and him that had no helper. *Iob. 29. 12. 13. 15.* That he was eyes to the blinde, feete to the lame, the which *Bathsheba* doth here command, when shee biddeth to open the mouth for the dumbe.

Yet shall hee not so fauour the poore in his cause, that he giue sentence on his side
in

in a wrongfull matter: for so it is in the law prescribed, that the poore man is not to be acknowledged in law, in a wrongfull matter; as on the contrary part, if his cause bee good, the iudge shall not onely giue sentence on his side, but shall also take his cause in hand, and pleade for him.

*Exod. 23, 3.
Leuit. 19, 15.*

In the former part of the chapter, haue beene handled things belonging to policie and publike gouernement, there follow such things as belong to a priuate family. Wherein first is to be obserued the manner of the speech, not onely ^a poetically, as the rest of the booke: but moreouer also framed with greater skill and labour, euery verse beginning in order ^b Alphabetically, and that for no other purpose: but that euery verse being diligently and carefully weighed and considered, may be the more faithfully retained in memory: for it is requisite that the holy ghost sharpening his stile, we should the more apply our wits and mindes vnto it: that he as it were polishing and refining his speech, we ought to haue our eares the more attentiuely vnto it: finally, that he as it were setting an edge vpon his words, we ought so much the rather to labour that no part of them doe escape vs.

*A. B. that is to
say in the origi-
nall or he-
brew.*

Furthermore, we are by this speecch and charge taught, that euery one as he is set in higher place in the Common-wealth, and in the Church, by so much more carefully he is to endeuer, that in the choise of his wife hee take great heed, that hee match himselfe with one most fit for him. For, hence it is the holy Ghost doth here set before vs, what manner of woman a Princes wife ought to bee. Hence also it was, that heretofore the lawe did set downe, what manner of wife the high Priest ought to haue, and did limit her in more strait bounds.

Leu. 2, 13, 14

Ezek 44, 22

1. Tim, 3, 2, 11

And finally, hence it is that the Apostle dooth namely and expressely set forth, with what vertues it is necessary the wiues of Bishops, and Deacons, should be endued and adorned; which I do not remember to haue beene performed by the ho'y Ghost, in any other sort of men. Whereby, what is the drift of this speecch, it may easily appeare: to wit, that *Bathsheba* had respect to this, to teach and intorme her sonne *Salomon*, what manner of woman he ought to begge of God in his prayers for his wife, and himselfe ought carefully and diligently to seeke after: and especially, for that the first and principal thing which
Kings

Kings are wont to looke into is, the beautie and nobilitie of their wiues. And moreouer also, that euery woman, maide, or wife should vse this as a glasse, wherby she may examine the beauty and deformity of her mind, that for her good gifts shee may bee thankfull to God; and contrariwise, may bewaile and correct her deformities.

Verse 10. Who shall finde a woman of strength, for her price is farre aboue the Carbuncles, or Rubies.

Verse 11. The heart of her husband trusteth in her, and hee shall not haue need of spoiles.

Verse 12. She doth him good, not euil, all the dayes of his life.

THe scope & drift of these verses is, as also of those that follow vnto the 28. to set forth vnto vs the vertues of a good wife.

And these vertues are, first of all, briefly comprehended in the 10. and 11. verses:

afterward they are more largely expressed. And in the 10. verse she is expounded to be described by a general property : then are reckoned vp the vertues, which are more proper to the mother of the family, which are divided into two parts, her duty towards the person of her husband, and towards the wole family, to the 25. verse.

Afterwards are rehearsed, the vertues which are common both to godly men, and godly women, from the 25. to the 28. verse. So as in this verse, composed with such skill, there are two things contained; first the excellent vertue of a woman to the 28. verse : afterward, the reward of the same to the end of the booke. And her commendation is first set forth by her rarenesse, which is concluded by the difficultie and hardnesse to find her: which difficulty is declared by a question; *Who shall finde her?* By which question she doth plainly declare, that such a woman as here is described, the King ought diligently to seeke after, both by himselfe, and his friends searching into euery corner of his kingdome. For if faithfull seruants are to bee sought for from the vtmost parts of the kingdome : much more wiues, which are ioyned in a more straight and inuola-

ble band: for which cause, we see that *Abraham* sent his seruant vnto another country, to take a wife for his sonne *Isaac*. And if *Assuerus* for the beauty of a woman, did cause all his kingdome to bee sought and surueyed: How much more ought Christian Princes to seeke her for her vertue. And if wee shall well examine the matter, this is one and a chiefe cause of this rarenesse; because there are so few men which doe seeke after such women. For if they were oftentimes, and of many men sought for, no doubt but there would be greater plenty of such women. But now, when women doe consider in themselves, that vertue and piety is not regarded, but beauty, nobility and riches; and that if onely they haue them, they please their wooers: Therefore are they so carefull for them, and doe set their rest vpon them. Whereof also it is, that the chiefe care of Parents is, to make them most beautiful, & most rich; altogether neglecting piety and good huswiferie. Howbeit, in their words, there is so great vanity, in their countenance so deepe dissembling, and in their manners, (for the time) so much counterfainting and hypocrisie, that no man (although of the sharpest wit) is able to iudge soundly, and per-

Gen. 24 3, 4*Esa.* 2, 3

Pro. 19. 14 &
18. 22.

Eccles. 7. 26.

perfectly of them. Wherefore they which doe take this in hand, trusting vnto their owne wit, are most grossely deceiued, vnlesse the helpe of God (first craued by praier) doe prosper and giue good successe vnto their labors. Wherefore *Salomon* in another place saith, that *Inheritance is left vnto children by their Parents, but a prudent wife is the gift of God*: And in *Ecclesiastes* making mention of the great mischiefe of a wicked woman, he saith, that he which is good in the sight of the Lord, is deliuered from her, but that the sinner is snared by her. Shee is further described by another adiunct of her price, which is often wont to arise from the former rarenesse, for those things which are rare are good, and that which is rare is deere. But her price or worth is set forth by a comparison of the lesser, to wit, of carbuncles, not one, but many: vvhich also is amplified by a comparison of the greater, for he doth not only say, that her value is a aboue carbuncles, but that it is far aboue them. So as it should seeme. an vniust thing to bring them in comparison together, and as it were so weigh them together in balance.

That wife therefore may bee sufficiently endowed, which is well nurture; and that
not

not onely because vertue of it selfe is a certaine treasure, but because God doth most commonly follow such a woman, with the blessing of riches. But the iudgment of men is farre otherwise: for except a woman be endowed either vvith a great stocke, or large rents, shee is no more esteemed for her piety, then a flint, or any other contemptible stone vvhich lieth abroad in the streets and high vvaies. But vvhat things are here spoken of a woman of strength, the same may also by a little turning of the word, bee fitly carried and applied vnto such a man.

After that he hath generally described this excellent woman, he deuideth her duty into two parts, whereof the former is concerning her ducty towards her husband, the other towards the whole family. Both which being briefly comprehended in this verse, are afterwards more largely vnfolded. And that which concerneth the former, doth seeme rather to belong to the praise of the husband, then of the wife. For it is the commendation of the husband to trust his wife, not to be ouer iealous towards her, neither to suspect her faithfulness towards him: which many men doe, who vnderferuedly doe suspect
E their

Pro. 7. 10. 18,
19. 20.

Gen. 26. 8. 9. 10

their wiues. But hee which shall more thoroughly enter into this matter, shall finde it rather to bee referred to the praise of the wife: For he teacheth, that so great and so absolutely perfect is her faithfulness, both in words and behauour, alone, and in company, that her husband may surely rest vpon her: For it is otherwise with this woman, then with that which is spoken of elsewhere. Whereof also that doth appeare, that it is not sufficient that women doe keepe themselues chaste, and vntouched of vicious men, vnlesse also they be of that integrity and vprightnesse, that they minister not so much as the least occasion of suspicion. For you may see many women, which although sometimes they be farre from the crime of adultery, not onely in act, but also in consent; notwithstanding by reason of their gesture and behauour, they are not free from all marks and notes of immodestie. Wherein the sincerity of elder times may condemne the loosenesse of this age: whereas by the sporting onely of *Isaac* with *Rebecca*, their marriage (contrary to that which they pretended) was coniectured: which is so much the more worthy the noting, in as much as it was not lawfull for the brother to sport

sport with his owne sister. For whereas *Rebecca* by the aduise of her husband, had carried her selfe as *Isaacs* sister, and *Isaac* had carried himselfe as *Rebeccaes* brother, the counterfeiting of them both, was by this sporting discovered. Amongst prophane heathen in times past, such great honesty of manners was obserued, that it was accounted an vn honest thing, for Parents with their children, and Fathers in law with their sonnes in law, to be bathed together in one bath.

Gen. 26. 7.

*Alex. Gen. lib.
4. c. 20. p. 243.*

But how much good and quietnesse there is in this faithfulnessse and chastity of the wife, whereby the husband is free from all suspicion of dishonesty, may bee easily discerned by the contrary torment of such men, as are vexed with the spirit of ieaiousie. And this by a little turning of the words, may be drawne to the duty of the man towards his wife. The other duty is providing for her familie, and it is declared by the effect of a woman of strength, to wit, procuring of plenty; especially of houshold furniture, which is set forth by likning her to those, which hauing obtained the victory, and slaine their enemies: doe bring the spoiles home to their houses. By which metaphor hee sheweth

that shee doth by her labour and industry helpe very much, for the maintaining of their estate. But hercof more shall be spoken in the rest of the Chapter.

Verse 12.

Gen. 2, 18.

He afterwards returneth to the description of her duety towards her husband, which first is propounded by the effect, that is, that shee will doe good vnto her husband; which is amplified by denying of the contrary. By which manner of speech he declareth that shee will doe nothing, but that which shall be good and commodious vnto him, for shee is giuen him of God for a helper. He teacheth therefore that it is the part of a good wife, to please her husband in all things, so farre as it may agree with the duty of a good and godly woman: for if for his good shee doth sometimes that which may displease him, shee doth not against her duty. Hitherto therefore shee ought to bend her endeauor, that shee may be praised without all exception. But there are to bee found many women, of whom it is said, shee is a faithfull and chaste woman, but yet a froward peece, shee is a good wife, but curst, and somewhat too talkatiue, and hasty to answer. But of this woman it is generally said, that shee is loiall, gentle, & perfect in euery iust & good duty.

After-

Afterwards this duty is amplified by the adiunct of the length of time ; that is to say, all the daies *of his life*. It is growen to a common Prouerbe amongst vs, to call the first moneth after mariage, the hony moon: Wherby, men wil shew that the beginnings of mariage are pleasant, but that there follow after many bitter yeeres. By another similitude also, they do compare the ioy of a widow desiring mariage, to a fire of thornes, which after a short blaze is presently put out and quenched. But this duty of a godly woman is not comprehended in lesse then the whole life of time. For she will not onely do good to her husband whilest he is young, but when he is old also, not only in health, but also in sicknesse, not only in prosperitie but also in aduersitie. And these duties are also to be performed of the husband toward his wife, and so much the more grieuously doth hee offend, if hee swarue from his dutie, in as much as God hath made him more strong, and furnished him with greater gifts.

E: 3

Verse

Verse 13. *She seeketh wooll and flaxe,
and worketh it according to the wil-
lingnesse of her bands.*

Verse 14. *Shee is like the ships of the
Merchant : Shee fetcheth her foode
from farre.*

Verse 15. *And rising vvhile it is yet
night, shee giueth the portion to her
house, and the ordinary to her maids.*

Verse 16. *She thinketh of a field, which
she taketh, of the fruites of her hand
she planteth a Vineyard.*

THis care for prouiding of wool and flaxe, seemeth little to agree with the wife of *Salomon*, so magnificent a King; for whom it should seeme to bee more fit, to be carefull to deck and trimme her selfe by the glasse, that her beaurie might be the more gracious, and pleasing vnto the King: but especially, it seemeth to differ much from the roiall dignitie, and Princely maieslie, that she should with her
owne

owne hands handle the distaffe ; and as it followeth after in the 19. verse, that shee should put her hands to the wheele, & her hands hold the spindle. For it seemeth she should sufficiently discharge the dutie of a mother of a family, if she do cause her maidens and seruants to doe this. But howsoeuer things may seeme to vs and our carnall iudgement, iudging of duty according to the present shewe ; notwithstanding the wisdom of God hath thought this to agree with the Maiestie of the greatest Princes, that they should exercise themselues both in these, and other duties belonging to women.

Wee read of *Sara*, who beeing a great Princeesse, yet shee kneaded dough, and dressed meate. Of *Rebecca* wee read, how by her cunning in cookery, she was able to counterfait meates, to cause that to appeare to be venison, which indeed was not. Of *Tamar* the Kings daughter, how shee was so well practiced in cookery that shee was able to make daintie and pleasant meates for her brother, faining himselfe sicke. In this our age, if any woman be of more noble birth, or haue riches aboue others, their manner is to bee so proud and disdainefull, that they thinke nothing may besecme

Gen. 18, 6

Gen. 27, 9, 17

2. Sam. 13, 5,
6, 9

Gen. 20, 1

beſeeme their greatneſſe; but what is ioy-
 ned with notable idleneſſe, and ceaſing
 from all honeſt buſineſſe, they may han-
 dle nothing which may make their hands
 hard, do nothing which may impaire their
 beauty. It appeareth by holy Scriptures,
 that *Sara* and *Rebecca*, euen in their olde
 age kept the traces and features of their
 beautie they had in their youth: and ther-
 fore no doubt but they had a care to con-
 tinue their beauty, that they might be moſt
 gracious and pleaſing to their husbands:
 but that through this care of their beauty,
 they did ceaſe from all honeſt labour and
 buſineſſe; it neither can agree with their
 duty, nor with thoſe excellent vertues
 wherewith they were endued. But if to
 Princeſſes and honorable women, it be not
 allowed to be idle, and to ceaſe from honeſt
 buſineſſe (whereas they notwithstanding,
 in regard of the weakenefſe of their ſexe,
 both are and ought to bee fauoured aboue
 others) can it bee lawfull for men to take
 vnto them this licence to liue at their plea-
 ſure, without any imployment. Wherein
 the men of our age doe more grieuouſly
 offend then the women. For what man is
 there that hath rents and poſſeſſions aboue
 the common ſort, which by this bounti-
 ful-

fulnesse of God towards him , doth not thinke himselfe freed and discharged from all honest imployment : so as hee thinketh he is in good state , if abstaining from doing wrong to others , he doe in the meane time giue himselfe to all loosenes of minde , spending his time both in hunting , hauking , and other pleasures of this life . Furthermore whereas shee doth her selfe seeke wool and flaxe , not staying till they should be provided by her husband : hereby is let forth her readinesse to labor , which is proued by the words following ; for whereas he saith , that shee doth these things according to the willingnesse of her hands , hee doth thereby teach , that shee doth readily and cheerefully goe about her worke , wherein about all things her strength is declared . For such things as are laid vpon vs by reason of our calling , ought to be done merrily and with a cherefull minde , for like as the sunne like a giant doth gird it selfe , that it may in 24. houres runne his whole circuit about the world ; so likewise ought wee to stirre and raise vp our selues to that worke , which is laid vpon vs . Men therefore (which haue a minde of more courage , and are of greater strength of body) may be ashamed to lye downe vnder the burden of such labors , as

are enioyned them. And this cherefulnesse is therefore propounded, that he may shew that thereby the worke is the more easily and speedily dispatched.

Verse 14.

It is thought that the wife hath sufficientlie performed her duty, if shee doe safely preserve and keepe those things which her husband hath brought in. But the holy Ghost teacheth vs, that it is the wiues duety to provide those things wherewith the familie is fed; and not such things onely as are neere at hand, but which also are brought from farre countries: from whence hee sheweth, that shee fetcheth them in marchants ships; because shee bringeth her foode from farre. Wherein seemeth some doubt, how a woman being by nature and calling, limited to keepe home, should fetch her foode from farre. Whereto I answer, that shee fetcheth her foode from farre, not by traueilling into forraigne Countries, or passing the seas, but by sending the workes of her hands into strange Countries, from whence shee may receaue either Come or other marchandize in exchange; and those things which at home are not to be had, shee may fetch from other places commodiously. But those things, when they are spoken of the Queene, what woman is there, which

which ought in regard either of her owne, or her husbands honour, to bee freed from the duty of procuring those things which may be of vse, not onely for her selfe, but for the nourishing also of her whole family. So as not the least part of the pompe and magnificence of the King, may seeme to depend on the prouidence and labour of his wife and Princeesse: by which meanes also commeth great freedome vnto the subiects, from tributes, taxes, subsidies, and other exactions. Wee reade that amongst some prophane heathen people, the reuenues of a whole prouince hath beene allowed to the Kings & Emperors wiues, to buy them pins & trifles.

And in this our age, women of noble parentage and degree are so prodigally sumptuous, that for the maintenance of their pompe, their apparell, their attendance, and their delicates, they are forced to make hauocke of their inheritance, as if they were borne and made for the wasting and consuming of the fruites of the earth. Hereof commeth the pilling and spoiling of their Citizens, enhaunsing of rents and fines of their tenants and Husbandmen, which till the ground.

Verse 15.

Shee is further described, by an adiunct of her watchfulnesse, and taking little sleep:

For, her mind being busied about her household affaires, doth not suffer her to oversleepe her selfe; but like a watch, dooth awake her betimes.

Many women there are, which although they giue themselues much sleep, being notwithstanding once wakened and raised, they do with great readines & diligence dispatch businesse of the house, and in that respect they are praise-worthy. But this womā here described by the holy Ghost, doth not only merrily and cheerefully buckle her selfe to dispatch her matters, but doth also betimes, and early set her hand to her worke. Hea-then people and strangers from God could see, that the Gouvernour of the Commonwealth and the Councillor, ought not to sleepe the whole night: But the holy Ghost requireth this euen in the mother of a family, that shee should rise before the night be spent. True it is indeed, that it is said in the 104. *Psalme*, that man goeth forth to his labor at the sun-rising: but this is no let at all, but that those things which are to be done in the house, as well of men, as women, may be begun before day. For they cannot by the helpe of a lanthorne doe those things which are to bee done abroad, and in the field: whereas notwithstanding the things
at

at home may bee dispatched by the candle-light. But if it doe not well beseme a woman of strength to sleepe till day light; how ill may it beseme a lusty man, which hath the strength of his limbes. And what things are in the sixt Chapter, and in sundry other places layde to the sloathfull mans charge, the same no doubt, in like manner, may fitly be objected to sloathfull and idle women.

Pra. 6. 6

This vigilancie or watchfulnesse he describeth by a double end, whereof the first is, that shee giueth to her whole family their foode, and that according to the sexe and degree of those which are of the family: for, it hath been before sayd in the 27. Chap. & 26. 27. verses, that there is one kinde of diet for the men seruants, another for the maids, one diet also for slaues, another for freemen, one for those that are strong, another for such as are weake, one for the whole, another for the sicke. The other end is that she setteth her maides and waiting seruants their taske: where is to be noted, that shee is carefull for foode for the whole family, but not that she doth therefore appoint the men seruantes their worke (which belongeth to her husband) but onely to her maidens.

*Verse. 16.**Pro. 14. 5**Pro. 14. 17*

Then it is further to be noted, that she giueth foode, and that she appointeth the workes, and prescribeth both the portion and the taske. For there are women to be found which doe appoint worke enough, and more then enough, but doe allow but a small portion. Others there are which doe allow plentie of foode, but haue small care of the performance of their worke: neither of these is to approued, neither of them is free from danger; for the one bewraith a basenesse and vilenesse of the minde, the other bringeth pride and arrogancie. Her diligence and watchfulnesse is further declared by the effect, to wit, that she considereth a field, which she purchaseth and planteth with vines. For so farre is she from diminishing the Kings rents, as she doth rather enlarge them. *Prouerb. 14.* It is said of a woman of strength, that she *buildeth her house*: which is amplified by the contrary. And this is a verie orderly thing, that to the end she may builde a house, she doe first set her minde to buy a fiede. For the rule is good of them, which say there is lesse profit in a house without a fiede, then a fiede without a house. Whereto also belongeth the counsell of *Salomon*, *Prepare thy worke without: and make ready that which thou*

thou hast in the field, that afterward thou maist build a house.

Morcouer, here is to be obserued, that she doth not first prouide her selfe of pleasant and delightful things, but those things wherwith these are maintained.

Verse 17. She girdeth her loynes with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

Verse 18. Shee seeleth that her Merchandise is good : her light is not put out by night.

Verse 19. She putteth her hands to the wheel, and her hands hold the spindle.

Verse 20. Shee stretcheth forth her hand to the poore, and putteth forth her hands to the needie.

Verse 21. She seareth not her family for the snowe : for her whole household is cloathed vwith double raiment.

Here first of all, is propounded to be considered, her continuall and vncessant labor to procure riches
vnto

vnto the 20 verse : then doth he adde, for what vse she getteth wealth vnto the 24. v. In the former part are contained two effects of a woman of strength, and a cause of the effects. The effects are comprehended in the 17. 19. and latter part of the 18. verse. And the cause of these effects is declared in the former part of the 18. verse. First of all therefore a man may here aske how this manner of speech which is here attributed to a woman, that she girdeth her selfe with strength, and strengtheneth her armes, may stand with the glory of God, forasmuch as that which is proper to God alone is caried to a woman. For euen Kings themselves are altogether without strength, sauing that God doth gird them with might, whereof being deprived, presently they become weake and feeble. Sure it is that the strength of the body, (euen as euery good gift) cometh from God aboue, in whom we live, doe moue, and haue our being: yet so notwithstanding, as God doth not exclude our endeaour, no not so much as in the worke of sanctification: much lesse in the worke of this life, for the performance whereof, there remaineth not so great strength after the blot of sinne. And first of all she may well be

Psa. 18, 33, 34
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Iam. 1.

Acts 17, 28
1. Tim, 8, 16
14. 4, 5, 8, 9, 10.

be said to gird her loines and her armes with strength, for that shee exerciseth her selfe and her body with labor: for as by idlenes & slothfulnes the strength is enfeebled in some sort, as yron vnused is eaten with rust, so by moderate exercise the strength is increased & augmented. Hereof is it that husbandmen & laborors hauing their health, the slothfull & sluggish are oppressed with sundry diseases.

Furthermore in another respect shee may well bee said to strengthen her loines, and her armes, for that shee conceiueth great hope to perfect these things which shee taketh in hand. For there are many which of a faint-heartednesse and base dispaire of their minde, dare not enterprise any excellent things; or hauing begunne it, out of an opinion of difficulty to finish that which they haue imagined to themselves, doe cast it out of their hands v unexpected. So comes it to passe, that through a vile and base feare, and distrust, they doe as it were lay bands vpon themselves, and being fettered hand and foote, they become vnfit and vnable for any notable worke, wherein there appeareth any shew of difficulty. Hereof the Israelites setting before themselves the height of the wals of the land of *Canaan*, & the taulnes of the men, reiecting all hope of vanquishing

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that

Numb. 13. 32.
Deut. 1.

that Country beganne to thinke of returning into *Egypt*.

This cowardnesse and basenesse of minde in thole, that belong vnto the Kingdome of Heauen is greater, for although there are some, which haue found the way and life very easie; yet many also are so discouraged with the difficulty thereof, that they will not once enter into this course. Which thing is manifestly declared in the words of *Moses*, *Deut.* 30. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. Also *1. Iohn* 5. 3. and *Math.* 11. 30.

Heere the cause (as often els where) is inserted as well of this which hath gone before, as of other effects which doe follow: to wit, that shee findeth the fruit of her labour to be good, and to haue good speede in those things which shee hath labored. And this hee amplifieth by a comparison of the like: For as hee which tasteth good and delicate meates neuer proued before: with the sweetness thereof, is entised and egged on to procure the same againe, although it bee with some hard and sharpe labor; so this woman being taught by the experience of the fruit of her labour and industry, doth the more cheerefully follow the same.

Those therefore which are sloathfull and idle, for as much as they reape no fruit of their
their

their idlenesse, are not stirred vp with any desire to labour. Such also as with labour wearying both themselves and theirs, doe notwithstanding receiue none at all, or very small fruite of their paines (because God not being called vpon by them refuseth to giue his blessing) these men also must needs faint vnder the burden of their labours. As on the contrary this woman (whose labours God by his blessing doth prosper) making wonderfull gaine, is encouraged to vndergoe her paines. And no doubt but the Israelites when they had once tasted of the fruites of the land of Canaan, did the more courageously ioine battell with the inhabitants thereof. Euen as also we see that good senting hounds, with the onely sent of the beast, which they doe course, doe mend their pace, and with greater swiftnesse doe chase their pray. On the contrary it comes to passe in many, who when as through the blessing of God vpon their honest labours, they are grone to some wealth, do giue themselves to idlenesse, and to their pleasures, till they haue wasted that which they had gotten with paine.

Psal. 127, 1, 2
Hag. 1, 6, 9

This in matters belonging to the life to come, is more euidently perceiued; for that so many hearers of the Gospell, doe so cold

ly frequent the assemblies of the Church, in the preaching of the Gospell, administration of the Sacraments, and other ordinary seruice of God : it proceeds from no other cause, but this, that they haue not tasted the fruit of the forgiuenesse of their sinnes, euen the peace of conscience. Whereas, if so be they had but tasted onely how good the Lord is, it cannot be vttered with what feruentnesse and zeale they would runne vnto the meetings of the Church, and would thirst after them, as the Hart chased by the dogges thirsteth after the waters.

Psal. 42. 1.
Iam. 2. 1. 2 3.

There followeth another effect of the efficient cause before declared: which is, that her light is not put out by night. It was said before that she preuenteth the day: Now he addeth that she so abideth to her worke, that she maketh not an end of her worke with the day, but draweth it forth and continueth it a great part of the night: Neither doth she (as some doe) labour by fits, but persisteth and perseuereth constantly in her workes.

Hereof may be gathered that she breaketh her sweete sleepe, For rising so early and going to bed so late; especially when she hath beene painefull in her worke; the sounder
sleepe

leepe must needes fal vpon her, so as she (but with some violence) doth not awake. Which thing is to be obserued of all, both men and women. For as it is not lawfull to eate vnto a fulnes: so likewise it is not lawfull to sleepe so long, till we haue satisfied our lust. It hath bin said before, how this woman of strength appointed maides their taske: he now addeth further, that she doth her selfe set her hands to worke. Hitherto also pertaineth she busieth her selfe in the same kinde of worke; with her maides, handling the whele and the distaffe, one after another. Although it be not vnlikely that she did spinne finer and costlier woole and flaxe, yet it is certaine that it was laboursome, and painefull, both the wheele & the spindle; whereto she was to put her strength, and vse her might.

For to what end is it, that it was sayd before that shee girdeth her selfe with strength but that she should haue need of strength to do her worke: Wherto also pertaineth that, which is spoken in this verse, that she putteth both her hands to the spindle. For, it is a thing layde vpon all the posteritie of *Adam*; not only to labour, but to labour hardly and with paine: For, notwithstanding that God hath appointed vnto women, such workes as haue lesse wearisomnes in them, in regard

of the weakenesse of their sexe, and of their paines of childe-bearing: yet are they not freed from those duties, which are ioined with some paine and tediousnesse.

Furthermore, it is to be noted that by this her working, she is not *only* her selfe exercised, but shee doth also take away all color of idlenesse from her maides: for it were a shame for the maides to plucke their hands from such work as their mistris her selfe doth not disdaine to doe. For here is that Proverbe true, which is sanctified by the holy mouth of Christ; that it is well with the seruant if he be in the same condition with his master, it is well with the hand-maide, if shee be in no worse case then her mistris. But this example of paines-taking, which she giueth to her maides, is of more force to worke in their mindes, then many admonitions or chastisements which are vsed without example.

This point also is to be obserued, to confirme and strengthen vs in the common duties of this life, as things acceptable vnto God; considering that the Anabaptists do esteeme of those things as too vile for Christians to exercise themselues in: But the Papists although they condemne not these things, yet they make the hands of godly

women more slacke, whilest they doe so highly extol the counterfait workes of their Nunnes, no wayes approued by the holy Ghost.

Hee hath alreadie spoken of the industry and diligence which she vseth in the dispatch of her worke, and of the happy euent and successe thereof.

There followeth, both the varietie and number of the workes, wherein she is occupied: and also, the end whercunto they are referred, which doth crowne all her former workes; and without the which it skilleth not much, whether the mothers of families be sloathful or diligent in their worke. For, if she should only lay vp in a chest these her riches gotten with paine, should heape vp treasures, or bestow them in trifles and toies, there were no cause why this praise should be giuen her. But now when as both in getting them her industry is declared, and in disposing them her piety and wisdom appeareth; no sufficient cōmendation can easily be giuen vnto her. For to som God hath plentifully and abundantly giuen discretion to bestow them to their iust and due vses.

In the verses following he describeth the ends, whereto she referreth her riches gotten with such diligence and continuall labor

Vers 20.

bor: wherof the first is, that she may succor the poore, and such as are oppressed vvith want. This is confirmed by the testimonie of the Apostle. *Ephes. 4. 28. & Prouer. 3. 26. 27.*

Whereby appeareth, how few there are which are indued with true piety; for how few men shal be found, which do know this end of getting riches: And of those which propound vnto themselues this end, the number is farre lesse.

Furthermore, whereas shee stretcheth forth and extendeth her hand, it teacheth how readily and cherefully, how bountifully also and liberally she doth it: for, *God loveth a cheerefull giuer: He sowveth his seede in a fat and fruitfull soyle, from whence he looketh for a hundredfolde.*

This manner of speech also declareth, that she is none of those delicate and tender women, which cannot indure to behold those that are in misery and affliction.

It is also to bee considered, that the first fruits of her labours are given to the poore: For whereas that which is distributed to the poore is sayd to be consecrated to the Lord; and there is none so ignorant which knowes not, that the first fruites are to be dedicated to God: it is manifest that there is a principall

*Psal. 112. 9
Eccles. 11. 1*

Pro. 3. 9, 10

pall regard to bee had to the poore.

Her next care is for her family, that it be well and sufficiently cloathed, that there be none in all her householde, which should be in any sort hurt by the weather; either cold, heat, winde or raine &c. so farre are they from going with torne and ragged cloathes. In the *1. King* 10. It appeareth, that the Queene of Saba gaue her iudgement of the wiledome of *Salomon*, by the apparell of his seruants. For as of the foode, so also of the cloathing of the household, the Governours must be carefull, whereas diuers in many households, are not only not wholesomely apparelled, but not so much as honestly and seemely couered: which as it is hurtfull to those of the family, so it is also an inconuenience to the Governours themselves, in as much as their necessary busines, by these meanes is hindered for want of health.

1. King. 7. 17
11
Deut 26. 13 14
Verse 21.

Moreouer, where it is sayde that she feareth not her family for the snow, therein is some difficultie: for it seemeth not to swarue from the duty of a wife, and godly woman to feare the incommodities of her selfe and hers: for feare is a spurre vnto vs, to auoide those things whereof wee are afraid, for a wise-man, *feareth the euill and escheueth it.*

H

Con-

Contrariwise, we may see many women which hauing little care of the diet and cloathing of their family, do leaue them destitute of things necessary. I answere, that it is want of feare, which proceedeth from hence, that being inconsiderate and vnadvised, they doe not foresee the things which are profitable for the family in the time to come; especially long time after. But this want of feare is vtterly to bee condemned: Howbeit that a woman, which in a due consideration of the inconueniences which may happen, doth stand in feare of them, and fearing doth stirre vp her selfe to all care and regard to prouide such things, which do belong vnto the maintenance of life, shee truely is not to be blamed.

And that woman which in a timely foresight of those things, whereby her household may be sufficiently maintained, doth so adresse her selfe to all honest skill, and means to defend the same, as shee may safely and securely cast away all carefulnesse, and feare of her family, shee indeed worthely deserueth praise. By this meanes cometh it to passe, that by diligent labor and continuall painfulnesse, men do rid themselves of many cares and griefes (wherewith, others are pained) when as they doe handle the ir matters

ters, according to the prescript of Gods Word.

Verse 22. She prouideth her tents: fine linnen and purple is her cloathing.

Verse 23. Her Husband is knownen in in the gates when hee sitteth with the Elders of the land.

Verse 24. Shee maketh fine linnen which she selleth; and deliuereth a girdle to the Merchant.

HEr next care is for the furniture of her house, provided and beautified with those ornaments which may most set forth the fairenes of the house, and the honor of the gouernor. For, it is not the least commendation of a Matrone, to provide that the house be thoroughly furnished, of bedding, hangings, tapestry, and other such like necessities, both for the necessity of life, and also for honest delight: For a man may see many women very sumptuously attired, whose houses notwithstanding lie empty and vnfurnished.

Neither truly doth the praise of this woman consist in this, that shee buieth these ornaments with her mony, but because shee maketh and weaueth them at her owne house. Which is to bee vnderstood both of those things which haue beene spoken of before in the 20. and 22. verses, and also of those which follow vnto the 25. verse.

Vnto this carefulnesse, to prouide household furniture doth succeed, care of trimming her owne body, and that with things farre more pretious, as fine linnen & purple. The which, although it seeme scarce to agree with the turning of the wheele, and handling of the spindle and distaffe: yet the holy Ghost hath thought them very agreeable. And here no doubt he bringeth in this woman so delicately apparelled, that hee might thereby commend these womanly workes and exercises vnto all posterity, as those which are worthy, and fit for such as are cloathed in very delicate apparel, so as their estate and degree will afford it. Which is not to bee vnderstood of all women, but according as euery ones estate will stretch; for this womans husband was among the chiefe, as appeareth in the 22. verse. But here some man may aske, whether it be fit that hee should first prouide for her owne selfe.

To

To whom I answered, that it is meete that shee prepare necessary couering for those of her houshold, before shee set her minde vpon delicacy, and finenesse of apparel for her selfe: euen as also shee ought to seeke for necessary foode for her family, before shee take thought for dainty meates for her selfe.

Whereupon it followeth, that those testimonies against costly attire, which the Apostle speakes of, are not simply to be vnderstood, but by comparison of godlinesse, more carefully to be sought for then the finenes of apparell. Neither is shee puffed vp with these so precious vestiments, considering that shee is continually in labour: a meanes that God vseth to schoole men to humility, for the women which by delicacy of their apparell, and soft array of their bodies, are lifted vp in the pride of their hearts, doeth thereby turne their purple into sackcloath.

Another effect or end of her continuall labour, consisteth in making ornaments, whereby as by certaine markes and signes her husband may be knowne, and discerned from other men, which is amplified by an adiunct of the time, when he goeth and sitteth in the assembly of the Eelder, where

1. Tim. 2. 9.

1. Peter 3. 3.

E. 27. 3.

Verse. 23.

ſpecially it beſcemeth him to be moſt comely apparelled.

But here ſome man may moue a doubt, how it may ſtand with the duty of a louing wife, that firſt ſhee prouideth ornaments for her ſelfe, and afterwards for her husband. Whereto I anſwere, that the outward ornaments of the body, are more fit for women then men, and that there cometh credit and praiſe to the man by the comely apparell of his wife, euen as it would be to his diſcredit, if hee himſelfe being gaily apparelled, his wife ſhould be without ornaments. Shee doth therefore trimme her ſelfe not ſo much for her owne, as for her husbands both credit and delight.

From all which things it appeareth that there is nothing ſo great or ſo ſmall in the houſhold, that there is none from the higheſt to the loweſt, from the head of the family euen vnto the foote, whom her care doth not reach vnto. For euen as in the common wealth thoſe that are ſo carefull for one part, as they neglect another, they doe grievouſly offend: and contrariwiſe they doe ſafely gouerne the ſame, which doe extend their care ouer all. So likewiſe in a family, ſhee which is ſo carefull for her husband and children, that ſhee neglecteth her ſeruants
and

and maides, doth very dangerously offend.

Some man will thinke that she is maruellously diligent in vndergoing her labours, which hath supplied so many and so great things, both for the necessities and ornaments of her familie. But this woman is of such an inuincible minde, that these so great labours being endured, shee doth not rest there, but setteth vpon other workes also, which being finished, shee deliuereth to the merchants.

Verse 24.

But all her other things in generall are costly: and such whereof otherwise by reason of the long and doubtfull cariage, the merchant should neuer make perfect. For it is such linnen as is, weaued of very fine and slender threds. The valew whereof may easily be gathered, in as much as the body of Christ (of whose honourable sepulture the scripture witnesseth) was wrapped in the same. And of the prize of the girdles, wherewith men and women are girt, the scripture is not without testimonies. 2. Sam. 18. 11. Ierm. 2. 32. *Esay* 3, 24.

Whereas by this manner of speech these lessons do belong euen vnto the Kings wife; it teacheth vs that it is no diseredite for a Princess to deliuer vnto the merchants such workes as by her owne skill she hath made.

It

It is knowne that in the auncient *Romane* common wealth, those of the chiefeſt nobility, did ſell the fruite of their orchards and gardens for mony: and there remaine yet in Germany (a ſheard of the Romaine common wealth) ſome ſignes of that cuſtome. But amongſt vs men are grown to that pride that they are accounted for baſe people, which ſhould imitate that manner.

Verſe 25. Strength and honour is her clothing, and ſhe laugheth.

Verſe. 26. She openeth her mouth in wiſedome, and doctrine is vpon her tongue.

Verſe 27. She prieth into the waies of her houſebould, and eateth not the bread of idleneſſe.

Hitherto hath beene ſpoken of the vertues, which are more proper vnto the mother of the houſehold there follow ſuch vertues, as are common to all godly people both men and women. In the, 22. verſe it hath been ſaid, that ſhe is cloathed and apparelled in fine linnen and purple,

ple: but in this place he bringeth in mention
offurther a kinde of raiment.

This manner of cloathing is of the minde,
as the former was of the body. This is the
same which the Apostles doth principally
commend vnto women, and doth preferre
before all other ornaments, though neuer
so precious and without the which, euen she
which is most neatly and daintely cloathed
is but naked and bare before God, the An-
gels, and holy men.

Tim. 2. 9
Pet. 3. 34

But of this inward cloathing there are
two parts set downe, strength, and honour
and comelines: whereof in the one is noted
the confidence of her minde, where by being
without feare she enioyeth rest and quiet-
nesse: by the other those vertues, which be-
side that they come from a minde well af-
fected doe procure a singular bewty, worthy
of all men to be looked vpon.

And truly what things haue beene spo-
ken hitherto, as they doe belong to the due-
ty of a good Matron, so may they sometimes
be found in women, which are voide of all
true piety, in *Jewes*, in *Papists*, in *Turkes*. But
those things which doe follow, are of that
kinde which as they doe onely fal vnto god-
ly Matrons, so doe they adde great glory vn-
to the former gifts, and doe as it were crown
I them.

them. And first for the strength of the minde it is proued by the effect, that shee feareth not the inconueniēces of the time following, which in men either quite destitute, or lightly endued with this trust in God, doth breed continuall vnquietnesse. This is that which the Prophet saith in the. 112. *Psalm.* vers. 7. *That the righteous man is not affraid of euell tidings.* And the same which *Salomon* hath *Pro. 28. 1.* *That the righteous is bould as a young lyon.* The cause whercof is assigned by the Prophet in the *Psalm* before resited, *because his minde is strengthened.* The cause also of which strengthning he doth there set downe *because his soule trusteth in God*; what is this else, but that which the Apostle teacheth, that through peace of conscience, which true faith worketh in the godly, they doe *euery reioice in tribulation*: and so farre are they from being discouraged in minde for feare of them, that not then truely when they are ouercharged with them, doe they faint, much lesse sinke vnder them. This singular tranquillitie of minde he declareth by an adiunct of laughings, because we doe vse to laugh at those, against whom we doe assure and promise vnto our selues certaine easie victory.

The blessed and happy estate of the godly

ly is here in this place notably described, and their vndoubted assurance of eternall life, whereby they are as certaine and sure of the life to come, as they are either of their present life, or their life past: which they know cannot either be weakened or taken away by strength or craft, either of things aboue, or things beneath, that neither prosperity, nor aduersity, neither famine, nor the sword, nor death, nor the banding and fronting of all mischiefes opposed against vs, is able to driue vs from the fruition of life euerlasting. The contrary whereof the Papists teach, which doe torment mens consciences with the continual torture of doubting and perplexitie. But this ought so much the more to confirme vs against all fearefull terrors, for that women by nature are fearefull and timerous. Whereof it is that this is called our goods, euen as other commodities of this life, are by our Saviour called others mens and not ours. Which ought to giue vs courage to seeke after those things, which no casualty may take from vs, being things which last for euer. In the goods of this life wee doe couet after those things, which are lesse subiect to change, as vnmoueable, rather then moueable. In merchandise those that are most staple are este-

Rom. 8.

Luk. 16 12.

med, which will continue longest without corrupting. And rents, and yeerely reuenues of inheritance are preferred before money: why should we not then vse the same wisdom in these things which doe neuer faile.

And thus much of the inward strength; there followeth the honour or comelinesse, that is, those vertues which haue a comely sight in the iudgement of the Angels, and all godly men: where in the first place cometh, that shee doth not vse speach, but wisely, and warily, which is very fitly applied vnto this woman. For it is commonly knowne and growne to a Prouerbe, that women by nature are more talkatiue, so as greater care is to be had, and straighter watch to be kept least at any time the lockes and barres of wisdom and modesty being broken, the tongue before being silent, doe wander and stray abroad here and there. Whereunto it is a great helpe, that a woman be constant and continuing in her labour; for euen as the Apostle doth define idlenes, & sloathfulnessse to be the seede of much talke in younger widdowes, so continuance in labour, is a singular remedy against rashnesse, and forwardnesse of the tongue.

1. Tim. 5:1.

The praise of her speech seemeth to consist

list not so much in the common speech of the things belonging vnto this life, which may be in infidels, as in another subiect of speech, it is a conference of holy matters. For he saith that the doctrine of benignity and kindnesse is in her tongue. By which manner of speech hee seemeth to declare both couenants of workes and of grace; whereof in the one the bounty of God towards vs doth stand; and in the other our loue both towards God, and towards our neighbour for Gods cause is required. For shee is not onely a hearer and reader of the word of God, but also shee conferreth thereof with her children, with her maides, and with her husband, instructing her children and maidens, as we reade of *Heser*, (for except her maides had first beene instructed to celebrate the Fast, they had beene altogether vnfit) and asking of her husband those things whereof shee standeth in doubt. Whether is to bee reserved, that in the booke of the Kings the name of mother is added, as a furtherer either of piety, or impietie of the children. Whereby the Iesuites are confuted, which doe so straightly tie the women to the wheele and spindle, as they doe cut them off, and

barre them from all conference touching the word of God, as absurde and far vnbecoming their sexe. See the examples of *Anna*: *1. Sam.* 2. And of the wife of *Manoah*, *14. of Iudges.* And of *Mary*, *Luke 1.* And of *Priscilla*, which both instructed and forwarded *Apollo* in the way of the Lord. Whereby appeareth how carefull godly women haue been for true knowledge out of the word of God: Whereas hee sayth that doctrine &c. resteth in her tongue, hee doth thereby plainly declare, how often she vsed speech, and how plentifully it dwelt in her house.

Col. 3. 16.

Whereby notwithstanding is not excluded, that which is the principall thing in this point, that shee hath the doctrine of benig- nity and kindnesse written in her minde; yea her often talking of the word God, is an vndoubted argument of the same writ- ten in her heart. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

Matth. 12.

Another effect of this matrone is; that shee searcheth and prieth into the whole carriage of her household, for it is not enough to appoint them what they shall doe, vnlesse shee doe as it were call them to account & reckoning, and finde out whether they haue well performed their taske: which is

to be understood not so much of matters belonging to the house (which are euen performed of infidels) sometimes as of holinesse which consisteth either in pietie, and godlinesse towards God, and righteoulnesse towards men. For notwithstanding that the chastising and punishing of the men seruants, slaves, and of the sonnes that are of age, is to be reserved to the husband, yet it is her part to inquire into the waies of the whole family; which is also required of the father of the family.

Furthermore, the metaphor of (prying) setteth to declare, that she doth sometimes search into the manners and fautes of her seruants and household, euen when they are not aware, and thinke nothing of it: euen as a spie or a scout, lieth in wait to looke forth whether the enemy approcheth unto the City and tents.

The conclusion of all which is, that she eateth not the bread of idlenesse. For when shee getteth wooll and flax, when as rising in the morning before day, and sitting vp a great part of the night, she appointeth her family their portion, and her maides their taske, when as she setteth her owne hand to the wheele and spindle, when as shee prouideth for her household cloathing, for her house

house furniture, for her selfe, costly apparel, and for her husband ornaments, when shee instructeth her family: And finally, inquireth into the waies of her whole household, it easily appeareth that shee eateth not the bread of idlenesse.

2. Thes. 3. 10

But those are said to eat the bread of idlenesse, which do receiue their meate, when as no honest labor hath gone before, and which is not gotten by labour: Wherby is confirmed that which is commaunded of the Apostle, that those that will not labour should not eate. But if it be therefore concluded, that she eateth not the bread of idlenesse, because shee is so busied as wee have sayd: it is euident that those are vtterly to be condemned of sloathfulnesse, not onely which labour not at all; but euen those also which in doing their worke are more slacke and negligent.

Verse 28. Her children shall rise and pronounce her blessed; and her husband, which shall prayse her.

Verse 29. Many daughters haue done vertuously,

*vertuously, but thou hast excelled a-
boue all.*

Verse 30. *Fauor is deceit, and beautie
is vanity: but a woman fearing the
Lord she getteth to her praise.*

Verse 31. *Giue vnto her the fruite of
her hands, and let her workes praise her
in the gates.*

THe scope and drift hereof is, hauing
propounded a reward to stirre vp
women to higher vertues; it is a
true speech that *Honour nourisheth arts*; and
that all men are kindled with a desire of
praise, and that those things are despised and
cōtemned which are misliked of euery one.
Which may be applied vnto the desire of
vertue and godlinesse: for although to iust
and vncorrupted Iudges, the fruite of their
duty is the dutie it selfe, and it belongeth
vnto the godly to seeke after vertue, for ver-
tues sake, and a conscience towards God; yet
God pittying our infirmity and slownesse to
good workes, doth set before vs a reward,
as it were a crowne to bee enioyed both in
this life, and in the life to come; to the end
he may correct our sluggishnesse, and drow-

finesse in well doing. Which being a thing necessary for men to whet them on to the desire of vertue, it is manifest that it is more expedient for women, as those which are weaker. Whereof it is that the holy Ghost doth make this garland of praise which he may set vpon the head of such a industrious woman, as he hath described that as by her vertue and pietie, so also by the reward of condigne praise, she may be discerned from other women.

Verse 28.

The chiefe good of all is, that she thinking and feeling her selfe happy, standeth not in feare of any danger which may befall her. But it is to be accounted in some degree of happines, if in regard of her good works she be worthely cōmēded of good men: especially, when as by this cōmendation of her excellēt facts is sealed vp the aprobatō of her good works by God himselfe. But that her own children, are here brought in by the H. ghost for spreaders of her prailes, it may seem somewhat strange. For, whereas (according to the testimony of the Prophet, (as wee haue heard before) *A mans owne praise in his owne mouth hath no grace*; It must needs be that the commendation of those of her owne family; especially, such as are more neerely ioined vnto her, is but of small force

to

to set her forth, as that which may seeme to proceed, either of selfe-loue, or flattery, that they may gaine somewhat of her. I answer, that besides the proper sence, here is a figuratiue speech, wherein by children is vnderstood, the dyet and apparell of her children, the honestie of the childrens manners; but chiefly their pietie and feare of God, wherewith by her carefull education; shee hath endued them, which are as it were so many mouthes and tongues, whereby the praises of a woman of strength are published.

Not vnlike vnto this is that which is saide in the 127. *Psalme*. Where he is pronounced b'essed which hath a quier furnished with children, who shall not bee ashamed when he contendeth with his enemies in the gates. Hereof also proceeded that exclamation of the woman *Luke 11. 27.* although shee were therein deceiued, if shee thought that Christ tooke any part of his wisdom, or goodnes of his mother, when as he was taught of himselfe.

He mentioneth this prayse of the children towards their mother, because her children, through her godly and wise education doe liue in that light and honour, which redoundeth vnto the commendation of their mother; whereas he saith that they

shall rise, that they may praise her, he seemeth to set forth their ripe age, when as (by marriage or publique charge) they come abroad, whereas those which were of vnripe yeares, seemed to lie at home in silence. For being come to yeeres, they are then either an honour, or dishonour to their Parents: as in the 127 *Psalm*, children are then like arrows wherewith their parents enemies are either slaine or wounded when they are of age.

Hence doe Parents learne, which doe neglect the godly and honest bringing vp of their children, that they nourish in their bosome, which may afterwards bite them, when they grow to ripenesse of age; who whereas if they haue vsed diligence and indouour in well bringing vp their children, they haue wherewith to comfort themselves, against their excesse and wickednesse whatsoeuer. As on the contrary, in the godlinesse and honesty of the children, they haue a ioyfull rest and comfort, wherewith to strengthen themselves and the manifold griefes and inconueniences of old age, being as it were their winter.

To omit that there haue beene some, who going to the gallows for their lewdnesse, haue cursed their mothers, because of their foolish coddling, they haue beene left vnto them-

themselves, and their owne lusts : as on the contrary, children being well nurtured, will blesse their mother, because shee hath instructed them, chastened them, and kept them within the bounds of their duty.

Which testimony of children, like as also that of the husband, which followeth, although it be lessened in regard, that in blood they are very neerely knit vnto her; yet is it of the greater credite : because they are eyewitneses of her actions, and whole conuersation. But children ought so much the rather to stirre vp themselves vnto a desire of vertue and piety, as that by their praise or dispraise, credit, or discredit, their Parents are either honoured, or dishonored, as those which haue part with their children, as well in the one as in the other.

The honor therefore which by the commandement is due to Parents by their children, is not shut vp within their fathers house, but continueth throughout the whole course of their life, euen then truely, when being departed forth of their Parents house, they are spread abroad in the common wealth, neither is the obedience due to their parents, then only violated, when they doe transgresse their commandements, but also when they doe defile themselves with

any lewdnesse, and wickednesse in any kinde whatsoeuer; whereof also it is that *Salomon* said before, that the *foolish sonne bringeth sorrow to his father*.

Her husband shall praise her: This commendation also of her Husband seemeth to be of small force to set forth her praise, by reason of that neere coniunction, which is betweene them, which will diminish the authority and force of the praise, besides the danger of being solicited to breake her fidelity by his prailing of her to others. The commendation therefore which her husband giueth her, is first of all in priuate and at home, which bringeth no inconuenience, and whereby the vertue and industry of the wife is increased.

Furthermore (as before in the children) so here there is a figuratiue speech; for the vigorous and good bearing of his age, his good disposition of body, and the ornaments of his apparell (whereof we haue spoken before) but especially for that shee wheteth him on to piety, euen then, when he holdeth his peace, doth abundantly speak of the praise of his wife.

For as the holinesse of the wife commendeth the piety of her husband, because shee is as it were the image of the man: so the

excellent piety and godlinesse of the man doth set forth a religious woman : which godlinesse, it is no doubt, but his vertuous wife hath in some measure wrought in him. Thus did *Priscilla* helpe *Aquila* in godlines, in which regard shee is by the holy Ghost set before her husband, although a faithfull man: as in the 14. of *Iudges*, *Sampsons* mother is set before her husband *Manoath*. After the commendation of the children, and of the husband, there followeth also the praise of the holy Ghost, speaking by the pen of *Salomon*: who doth by a comparison of the lesler amplify her praise. But shee is compared not with a carelesse, and sloathfull woman, but with a woman of strength, and not with one alone, but with many to whom shee is not equalled, but farre preferred, and placed as it were in a higher estate; but if it be asked, what women of strength these are, to whom this woman is preferred. I answer, they are those, which being void of faith towards God, doe notwithstanding imbrace chastity, loue their husbands deere, provide plentifully for the diet and clothing of their family, seeke woll and flax, set their hands to the wheele and spindle, rise before day, goe to bed late, are carefull for furniture for their house, of
all

all sorts, doe decke both themselves and their husbands, doe thinke of a field which they buy, and plant it with vines: but in the meane time being void of faith, are fearefully terrified with the euils to come: yea, euen with shaddowes of euils, as before hath been declared out of the 25. 26 and 27. verses. And truly in this kinde there are found not onely Popish women, Iewes, and Turkes, but also some professors of the Gospell, but in shew onely: before all which (though in number infinite) one of these is farre to be preferred, not onely in these vertues, which are proper and perculiar to her, but in those also which doe fall into both kindes of women. For although the same things be performed of them both, notwithstanding seeing the one doth them of conscience towards God, the other of a certaine instinct of nature, or to get praise and commendation amongst men, it appeareth that there is as much difference betweene them, as is betweene heauen and earth. Hereby appeareth, how precious a thing faith is, wherewith all our workes are, as it were, perfumed, to be acceptable vnto God, and without which, the most glorious workes stinck, and in their greatest glittering are not withstanding sinnes.

In this verse hee doth by another argument, from a comparison, set forth her praise, where he preferreth her before a woman, that is exceeding faire and well faoured: where also there seemeth to be a meeting with a secret and priuie obiection; the obiection is drawne from an apparant charge of the Prophet, as if hee were not wise and skilfull enough in describing and setting forth this woman, neuer sufficiently praised: as he, which in the reckoning vp of her vertues, had forgotten two ornaments, her beauty and comelinesse, vnto which the Prophet answereth, by an adiunct of the deceit of fauour, and vanity of beauty. But vanity and deceit are not of one sort. For first of all they are deceitfull and vaine; because the beauty and good fauour is vanished and painted, whereby the foulest women haue appearance, and goe for faire, which vpon the feeling of the fire, or any other heate melt away. Furthermore because that beauty and fauour, which pleaseth to day, displeaseth to morrow, and that which is now esteemed to be a trace of beauty in the cies of the louers, is by and by accompted a wart or a wenne. As appeareth by the example of *Simon*, who being inflamed with the loue of his sister *Thamar*, because

of her beauty : was as it were in a turning of a hand, in a deadly hatred of her.

Moreover, it is very truly called deceitfull and vaine, because as it were a flower, it perisheth, with the least blast of the winde of the iudgement of God, indeed fauour and beauty is the gift of God, wherefore it is before compared by *Salomō* vnto a ring of gold yet hath the holy ghost thought it vnworthy to be reckoned among the former vertues.]

But by this former Iudgement of the holy Ghost, God would note the folly of men, who in choosing their wiues, doe principally inquire after that, whether shee bee faire and well fauoured, so as if shee haue those, although shee bee endued with none of the former vertues, yet shee is accounted fit for them. And contrariwise shee which is indued with the former vertues, vnlesse shee haue also fauour and beauty, is scorned and dispised of all men : wherein the madnesse of men doe notably bewray it selfe, that they doe carry themselues soe carelesly and dissolutely in a matter of great weight, and wherein consisteth the quietnesse of this whole life, and no small helpe to the life to come. If a man buy a horse, is he so mad that hee will rest onely in the colour and shape of his body neuer looking whether he be lame or broken winded. Or if a man buy a golde

ringe, doth he thinke himselfe satisfied that in shew onely it glistereth like gold? or doth he not rather bring it to the touchstone, to try whether it be pure gold or gilt onely.

The estimation of fauour & beauty, is yet diminished by the vnfit praise, which is not meet for a woman indued with them; which is amplified by a comparison of the dislike: because a woman fearing God is worthy of praise: for notwithstanding that fauour and bewty (in regard that they are the gifts of God) doe deserue commendation, yet shee which hath them, seemeth not to deserue praise, seeing they are gotten by no skill or labor of hers, no, not so much as by her will: for except it were giuen her of God euen from the cradle, shee should labor in vaine to get it: but the feare of God, notwithstanding it be the gift of God, yet is it not giuen at the first, but to such, as doe will and desire it (God inclining their wil & affection) & being once begunne it receiueth increase through our desire care and industry.

So as notwithstanding, a faire and beautifull woman for her beauty may be praised; yet in comparison of that notable and singular commendation which is rightfully done vnto the woman that feareth God, she is not to bee thought praise-worthy. And

then by a comparison of the greater is lessened the praise of beauty, and comelinesse is beaten downe: and this deniall and lessening of the praise of good fauour and beauty, is more strongly declared, by this word, (she doth get praise vnto her selfe) as if the beautifull and wellfaoured woman did not so.

Hereby is refuted not onely the vanity of men, but also their ingratitude towards God, which do imploy the whole power of their wit and learning, for the praise of beauty and fauour, not onely generally in the whole body, but particularly in euery part of it, from the head to the heele, vsing thereunto all the flowers and colours of their eloquence, wherewith they garnish and set them forth, who in the meane time in the commendation of vertue, are either dumbe, or cold.

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He goeth forward in the reward and recompence of this woman of strength, where the holy Ghost by the Prophet doth call vpon all men, that they should yeeld vnto her the prayse due vnto her vertues and notable workes. The holy Ghost therefore doth exhort her husband, that both while he liueth, & when he is going to death, he should deale liberally with her in diet, cloathing and other

lawfull and honest delights of this life, and should graunt them vnto her bountifully & plentifully for her vse. Hec exhorteth her children and seruants, that they do vse all singular reuerence and obedience towards her: neither doth he exhort onely thole of her familie, but also all others; yea euen the Magistrates themselves, so often as occasion is offered (as when women are brought in iudgement before them, for some slip in their manners, it is not vnseasonable to set before their eyes the laudable conuersation of this vertuous woman) that they doe imploy themselves to set forth her praise: For notwithstanding that this woman, together with her notable workes be shut vp and limited within the wals of her owne house, yet her praise passing forth, and climbing vp the top of the house commeth & appeareth at the holy seate of Iustice.

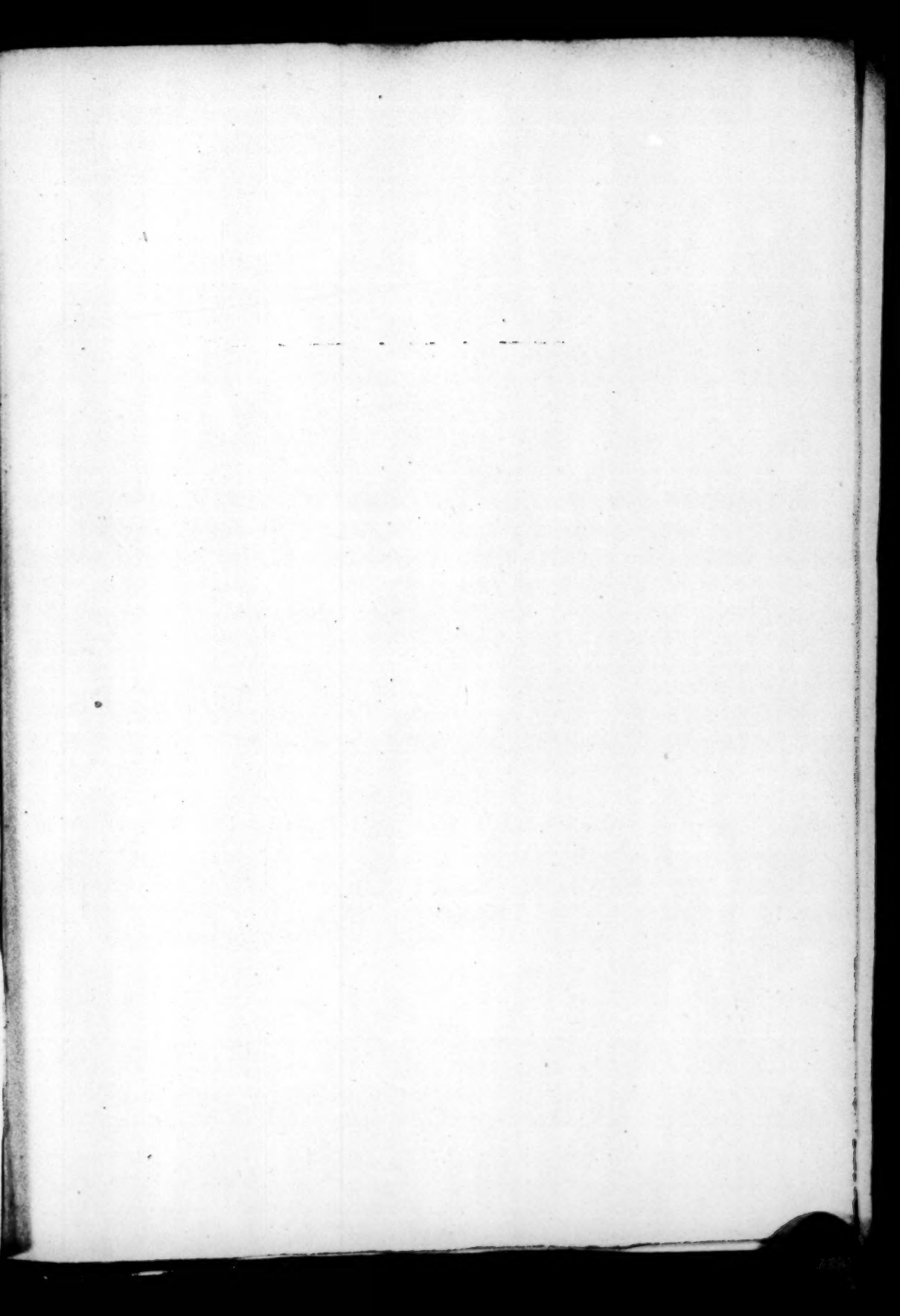
Whom therefore God commendeth and thinketh worthy to be praised, in the extolling of them, we ought to imploy, not onely our tongues, and pennes; but euen also as it were our shoulder, wherewith being borne vp, and vnderpropped, they may bee, as it were, lifted vp into an open place, from whence their vertue may be seene of all.

The which ought to confirme vs in the

study of vertue; especially when we know that the hearts and tongues of all men are in the hands of God, so as hee is able to bend them even in those that are voide of all pietie, to publish the praises of the godly, as appeareth by the examples of *Ioseph* and *Moses* abiding in *Aegypt*. But if men in this behalfe be dumbe and unthankfull: yet it ought to strengthen and retaine vs in our duty, that God by his heavenly voice doth vouchsafe to praise vs: and moreover in time to come, in the greatest assembly of the whole world, he will, as it were in the highest court commend vs, which ought most plentifully to satisfie vs, both then, when men are not only silent in our commendations, but further also when they doe vnderferuedly speake euill of vs.

FINIS.





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